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Inspiring Change: International Women's Day



Nowadays International Women's Day is celebrated in many countries around the world. It is a day when women are recognized for their achievements without regard to divisions, whether national, ethnic, linguistic, cultural, economic or political. It is an occasion for looking back on past struggles and accomplishments, and more importantly, for looking ahead to the untapped potential and opportunities that await future generations of women. The fact is, not so many people know that, the first National Woman's Day was observed in the United States on 28 February 1909. The Socialist Party of America designated this day in honor of the 1908 garment workers' strike in New York, where women protested against working conditions.

We need to continue to strive for equality. International Women's Day is not only a great opportunity to celebrate the success of women around the world but to also acknowledge present day struggles and opportunities for continued progress.

Here are some inspiring quotes from famous women to help us celebrate International Women's Day:

"Life is not easy for any of us. But what of that? We must have perseverance and above all confidence in ourselves. We must believe that we are gifted for something and that this thing must be

attained."

— **Marie Curie, chemist and physicist**

"Just don't give up trying to do what you really want to do. Where there is love and inspiration, I don't think you can go wrong."

— **Ella Fitzgerald, African-American Jazz singer**

"As a woman I have no country. As a woman my country is the whole world."

— **Virginia Woolf, Author**

It is past time for women to take their rightful place, side by side with men, in the rooms where the fates of peoples, where their children's and grandchildren's fates, are decided. **Hillary Clinton, Politician**

Don't compromise yourself. You are all you've got. There is no yesterday, no tomorrow, it's all the same day.

-- **Janis Joplin, Singer**

The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams.

-- **Eleanor Roosevelt, US Diplomat**

Every year over 70% of SJ Vietnam's volunteers are female.

We would like to send a big thank you to all the women involved in our projects over the years. Without you we wouldn't be where we are today.

Today, wherever you are, whatever you do, remember to appreciate and say thank you to women you meet .



EVS Volunteering in Italy

Volunteering in Italy



“I have spent 3 months experiencing life abroad in a country which is thousand miles away from Vietnam. There are no words to explain how much I am loving and enjoying my volunteering life here in Italy. There were initial struggles in the first few weeks, which involved facing up to culture differences, foods differences and language barriers. I have learned to overcome these issues day by day and to stay positive.

Why did I decide to do this? Why did I not find a stable job and work in my country? Why I am here in Pesaro? I was asked these Questions by lots of people, and my response is always ‘Why not?’. Pesaro was not a choice but it is a destination for me to start my European discovery. People feel calm & relaxed when visiting this small city, located by the Adriatic Sea coast.

There is a big square in the center of the city where all the fairs, markets, festivals take place. It is also a place where people sit and chat to

each other in the sunshine and where children have fun playing by the fountain or chasing after the pigeons.

I’m the only Vietnamese girl in town and I am living together with 3 other volunteers from Poland, China, Lithuania and 1 tutor from the hosting country, Italy. I am sometimes lonely when there is nobody that understands me, but its also an experience for me to learn to integrate with a community in which people have lots of different thoughts, points of views and perceptions.



Knowing how to adapt to a new environment is also a skill that this European Voluntary Service has brought to me. I’ve learned from my “foreigner” friends little things like how to make pasta, how to decorate the house, make postcards and more “macroscale” things like how to deal with conflicts that always appear when living and working together in such an intercultural environment like this.

I had great chance to be a part of a local art festival called ‘Perepepe’ on the very first month when I first arrived. I was so amazed by how

the staff, artists, singers from all around were gathering here.

EVS has changed me day by day and little by little, that I could only realize when I see how am I standing and doing my presentation in front of many people, students, youngsters, which is something that I never thought that I could do before.

It’s giving me a chance to be independent & be confident, something that I was totally lacking before coming here. I used to be a shy girl, who had no confidence in myself, always in my comfort zone with the caring of parents and friends. It was a big step to move out of my safety zone, to do everything on my own, be responsible for what I was doing. 6 months more to go and I have lots of things to learn and experience.

Facing with troubles and difficulties is a good way for me to challenge myself and get ready to be on more adventures waiting me ahead.



Job Shadowing in Spain



**“You are like a Creator.
You choose what to learn,
just set yourself priorities”**

My journey in Spain began on 3rd to 11th January 2104 .

Participation on the training course is a unique opportunity to learn from the environment and people around me.

“What did I learn during my training course?”

I learnt how to live in a multicultural environment. Everywhere around me I meet people from different countries. People from completely different parts of the world: Europe, Asia. Everyone has their own customs, habits, and their own world view. In some ways we are very similar, in some ways we are very different.

I agree that in our home country we can find people with completely

different pictures of the world, but here I feel it much stronger because of different cultures and customs.

My previous experience of working with people from different countries and travel experience helped me. To live in these new conditions is very interesting, but sometimes it is not easy.

“Learning how to live independently”

In my home country and city in almost all cases I know how to be independent, make decisions and how to act.

This course requires a lot of autonomy and for you to be proactive.

“I learnt how to live life 110%”

This training course has limited time and knowing this, I wanted to do as much as possible. “I will do it tomorrow” – is unacceptable here.

So I learnt how to manage my time better which helped me to do a lot more things.

I became more interested in history, culture and politics of my country. Almost everyone asks me about it and I need to give people correct answers. And through this training course , I have a chance to introduce SJ Viet Nam with international friends and our projects to let them understand clearly what our organization is doing .

“Finally here I am getting know more about myself”

In such a new environment my values, ideals and points of view had a really good test. You can either get lost or, on the contrary, strengthen your identity and continue to follow your dreams.

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“I am a mother of hundreds of babies”

Bo De pagoda (known as orphanage) is one of long-term projects that we run for many years. There were only 15 children when Bo De started to adopt and these children lived together with monks in the pagoda. Since 2004, the numbers of children being adopted is increasing each month. Now there are approximately 200 children at the orphanage. Seeing 30 nannies looking after 200 babies will touch you deeply.

We talked with Ms Nhan - the nanny who has been working there for 5 years.

“The poor children! Their parents put them in front of the pagoda when they were just a few days born. Sometimes, they call for monks to pick up their babies somewhere because they couldn’t afford to raise their children. Each nanny has to look after 3 - 5 new born babies . Difficult? Yes. A lot. Look! (she shows us 3 children in baby cot, and larger babies in the bed.) The small ones are our priorities because they feel hungry all the time and need constant attention.. The bigger children have to play by themselves as we are too busy looking after the new born babies and some of the children have HIV and cerebral palsy”.

“Do you ever think about quitting?”

“Yes, sometimes I do feel like walking away as I get so tired but I can’t leave as I love the children and as long I still have enough strength I will stay here to raise the children. I am a mother of hundreds of babies and I’m happy.”

“I wish you a healthy and happy international women’s day.”

UPCOMING EVENT

1. SJV1404 - Taking care of disabled and autistic children at Phuc Tue center (3 available position)

2. SJV1405 - Renovating a farm and taking care disadvantaged orphans at Hope center (5 available position)

3. 13/4/2014: Global youth day

4. Contest “Seeking global leader” 2014

